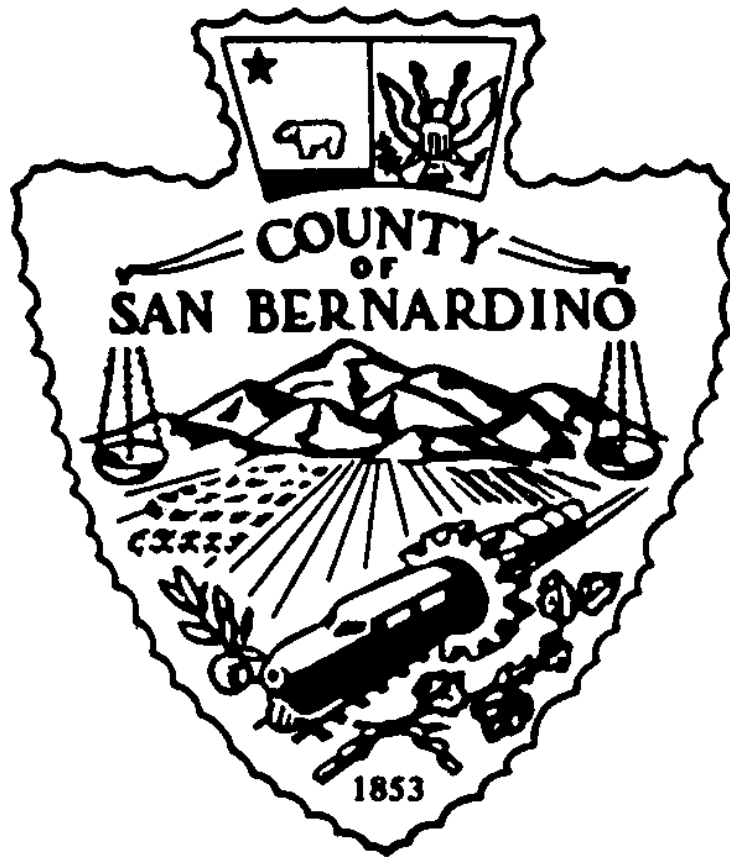


# Safety Meetings



## SAFETY MEETINGS/GENERAL INSTRUCTIONAL TALKS

It is important for supervisors to meet regularly with employees to discuss safety and health. It is only through face-to-face contact that effective communication on the subject can take place. Open, informal group meetings encourage questions and discussion that "personalize" the issue of SAFETY by focusing on day-to-day applications.

Risk Management Division/Safety Section has available a variety of topic outlines, employee handouts and audio/visual aids for the use of supervisors.

Regular safety meetings, "General Instructional Talks", are required in all departments.

### ENCOURAGE SAFETY AWARENESS

When small groups of workers get together to discuss hazards they have encountered and steps they can take to eliminate them, it increases each co-worker's SAFETY consciousness.

### MOTIVATE EMPLOYEES TO FOLLOW PROPER SAFETY PRACTICES

Small group meetings are best to demonstrate the use of protective equipment, proper lifting techniques, and other specific SAFETY procedures.

### NIP SAFETY HAZARDS IN THE BUD

SAFETY meetings should pinpoint minor hazards before they result in real problems. Hazards that are inherent in the environment and that experienced employees are likely to take for granted should also be discussed.

### INTRODUCE WORKERS TO NEW SAFETY RULES, EQUIPMENT AND PREVENTATIVE PRACTICES

In addition to introducing new topics, reinforce the importance of long-standing SAFETY procedures and remind employees of the reasons behind them.

### PROVIDE VITAL INFORMATION ON ACCIDENT CAUSES AND TYPES

Keep employees up-to-date on hazards in their environment and what management is doing about them. Discuss accident statistics and how to prevent reoccurrence.

### TYPE OF MEETING

A safety meeting, or General Instructional Talk (GIT), should be for a small group of employees. Greater exposure to all employees will result and ample time will be available for employee questions and answers.

SAFETY meetings require planning and forethought. There is a danger, however, in adhering to a set "agenda". Employees quickly become blasé about attending meetings that are carbon copies of each other.

The supervisor should ensure: (1) employee interest is aroused and held; (2) employees are not overloaded with information and ideas; (3) employees are comfortable enough -- both physically and emotionally -- to prevent restlessness and encourage participation; and (4) employees leave the meeting with an improved attitude and more useful information than they had prior to the meeting.

The most successful SAFETY meeting lends itself to a small group format. It is a periodic General Instructional Talk, the purpose of which is to provide employees with pertinent information. Typically a GIT lasts only 5 or 10 minutes. Long enough to get the information across, but short enough to avoid boredom and restlessness.

### PREPARATION AND PLANNING

No matter what topic is chosen, there are a few recommended guidelines for preparing a meeting:

1. CHOOSE TOPIC CAREFULLY. A subject related to a recent accident or the purchase of new equipment will make a greater impression on employees than a less timely topic.

2. GATHER FACTS AND FIGURES. Be sure facts are complete and accurate. Consider whether they might have more impact as a chart or other visual aid.
3. MAP OUT THE PRESENTATION. Decide beforehand the best way to present a subject. Anticipate employees' questions and reactions. Outline goals in terms of changed attitudes, reduced accident rates, etc.
4. SET A TIME LIMIT. Decide on a realistic time frame and stick to it. Employees are more apt to give their attention when they know the meeting isn't going to drag on.
5. PRACTICE DELIVERY. Give thought to how employees will interpret the manner of presentation. Convey sincerity and interest through stance, gestures, and tone of voice.
6. DEVISE STRATEGIES TO GET EMPLOYEES INVOLVED. Develop questions requiring more than a Yes or No answer. Set aside time at the end of the meeting for discussion, and prepare comments to keep the discussion going.

## HOW TO CONDUCT A SAFETY MEETING

If one is thorough in preparation and planning, a meeting will practically run itself. Experience and practice will help improve GIT skills.

Basic steps that should be followed in conducting a meeting on almost any topic are:

1. INTRODUCE THE TOPIC. Tell the group what the meeting is about. Don't go overboard trying to be clever.
2. PRESENT THE FACTS. Be concise in providing employees with necessary background. Present facts and figures in as interesting a manner as possible.

3. DEMONSTRATE. Demonstrate the point. Get employees involved in any demonstration. This will give a meeting added impact.
4. OPEN THE MEETING UP FOR DISCUSSION. Answer questions, clarify misunderstandings, and obtain feedback from employees. An active discussion is usually a good indication that a meeting has been successful.
5. SUMMARIZE THE MAJOR POINTS. Recap what has been discussed and decided. If the group has agreed on steps to correct a hazard or improve an unsafe condition, remind employees about what they have agreed to do.

## USING VISUALS AND STATISTICS

To capture employee attention, GIT's should be kept interesting. Audio/visual aids and carefully chosen statistics are excellent means of reinforcing the message of a GIT and maintaining a high level of interest among listeners.

Compile statistics from department records of accidents and occupational injuries. They provide objective evaluation of a department's overall progress in meeting SAFETY goals. Statistics are also useful in pin-pointing problem areas. For example, if 10% of the occupational injuries involved lifting type accidents, this is a good topic to focus on, with appropriate follow up at subsequent meetings. Statistics can also be an effective motivational tool.

The same can be said of visual and audiovisual aids. Visual aids can be used to inform, persuade, motivate, and entertain. They can also be used to solve problems. Don't let visual aids run a meeting. They are only effective when used to back up what is said.

Supervisors should schedule and plan GIT's so that they become a normal part of work activities. Page 244 herein provides a log to be used in such planning. GIT's are a vital part of employee training and must be documented. Page 247 herein provides a format for such documentation.